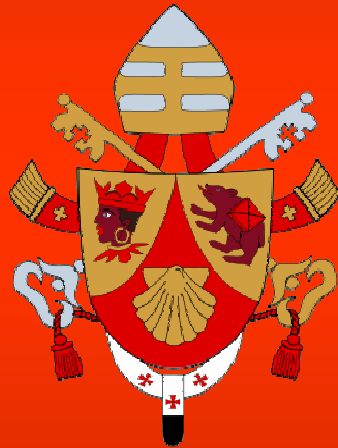


Lidia Bastianich

Cooks for the Pope



April 18th-19th 2008

April 19th 2008



April 19th 2008



Lidia's Press



- **ABC News Nightline** - April 20th 2008
<http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/story?id=4664418&page=1>
- **The New York Times** – April 24th 2008
http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/b/lidia_bastianich/index.html
- **Serious Eats** – April 22nd 2008
http://www.serioeats.com/required_eating/2008/04/lidia-bastianich-cooking-for-pope-benedict-xvi-the-menu-revealed.html
- **The Wall Street Journal** - April 18th 2008
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120846885183124311.html>
- **The Daily News** – April 18th 2008
http://www.nydailynews.com/lifestyle/food/2008/04/18/2008-04-18_bastianich_plans_a_meal_fit_for_the_pope-1.html
- **New York 1 News** - April 23rd 2008
<http://www.ny1.com/ny1/content/index.jsp?stid=247&aid=80432>
- **CW11** – April 18th 2008
<http://cw11.trb.com/news/local/wpix-cooking-pope0418,0,4317317.story>
- **Catholic News Service** – April 15th 2008
<http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0802030.htm>
- **Rai International** – Interview with Francesca Lioni- April 16th 2008
- **Univision** – April 20th 2008
- **TG3** – Interview with Giovanna Botteri – April 2008

Lidia Bastianich



www.lidiasitaly.com

- Lidia Matticchio Bastianich was born in Pola, Istria on the northeastern coast of the Adriatic Sea.
- She is a cookbook author, restaurateur, and one of the best-loved chefs on television.
- Cookbooks include her latest, *Lidia's Italy*—a companion book to her new television series, *Lidia's Family Table*, *Lidia's Italian-American Kitchen*, *Lidia's Italian Table* and *La Cucina di Lidia*.
- She is also founder and president of *Tavola Productions*, which produces quality broadcast shows, like *Lidia's Italy*.
- Lidia is the chef/owner of acclaimed New York City restaurants- *Felidia*, *Becco*, *Esca* and *Del Posto* as well as *Lidia's* in *Pittsburgh* and *Kansas City*.
- Along with her son Joseph, Lidia produces award-winning wines at the Bastianich and La Mozza wineries in Friuli and Maremma. With her daughter, Tanya Bastianich Manuali, and Shelly Burgess Nicotra, she heads an exclusive travel company that implements excursions to Italy that combine gastronomy with art history.
- Lidia stays active in community service on behalf of the James Beard Foundation and Public Television.

Joe Bastianich

- Joe, along with his mother, Lidia Matticchio Bastianich, and business partner, Mario Batali, is a key player in the food and wine revolution that transformed the red checkered tablecloths and fiasco Chianti of a prior era.
- He partnered with Lidia to open his first restaurant, **Becco**, a theater-district trattoria, where his unprecedented “prix fixe” wine list was met with overwhelming enthusiasm.
- Meanwhile, Joe and Lidia have created a multi-unit Italian restaurant concept called **Lidia’s** with locations in Kansas City and Pittsburgh.
- Joe ventured into his ancestral Friuli-Venezia Giulia to create the acclaimed estate, **Azienda Agricola Bastianich**.
- In Maremma, Tuscany he, Lidia and Mario established the wine estate **La Mozza s.r.l.**
- Joe gave a voice to his passion for Italian wine with his award winning book, *Vino Italiano*, which he co-authored with sommelier and journalist, David Lynch.



- In 2005, he received the James Beard Foundation’s Outstanding Wine and Spirits Professional award, as well as the title of Bon Appetit’s Wine and Spirits Professional.
- Joe is featured frequently as a wine expert on NBC’s Today Show and Fox Business Network’s America’s Nightly Scoreboard with David Asman.

Menu for April 18th 2008

*Pranzo in presenza ed onore
di
Sua Santità Papa Benedetto XVI
e del Suo Seguito
in occasione della Visita
alle Nazioni Unite*



*Residenza Pontificia
New York, 18 Aprile 2008*

Aperitifs: Dorigo Brut N.V., Girolamo Dorigo



Menu

*Insalata di Fagiolini, Porri,
Mandorle e Ricotta Romana
Spring salad of string beans, leeks and pickled shallots,
with toasted almonds and sheep's milk ricotta
Vespa Bianco 2006, Azienda Agricola Bastianich*

*Ravioli di Cacio e Pere
Pear and young pecorino filled ravioli
with grated, aged pecorino cheese and crushed black pepper
Vespa Bianco 2006, Azienda Agricola Bastianich*

*Risotto con Verdure di Primavera
e Schegge di Grana Padano
Aged Carnaroli spring vegetable risotto with shavings of Grana Padano
Vespa Bianco 2006, Azienda Agricola Bastianich*

*Spigola Striata Selvatica al Forno
con Insalatina e Patatine all'Olio Extra Vergine
Whole-roasted Wild Striped Bass
with imported greens and warm potato salad
Vespa Bianco 2006, Azienda Agricola Bastianich
or
Aragone 2005, Azienda Agricola La Mozza*

*Strudel di Mele con Gelato alla Vaniglia
Variegato al Miele
Apple strudel with honey swirled vanilla ice cream
Plus Passito "per Lidia" 2003, Azienda Agricola Bastianich*

*Caffè
Limoncello della casa*

Hosted by

*H.E. Archbishop Celestino Migliore
Apostolic Nuncio*



*Chef Lidia Bastianich
and her Family of Chefs and Advisors*

*Fortunato Nicotra
Executive Chef of Felidia*

*Mark Ladner
Executive Chef of Del Posto*

*William Gallagher
Executive Chef of Becco*

*Angelo Vivolo
of Vivolo Restaurants*

*Joseph Bastianich
Winemaker/Restaurateur*

*Biagio Settepani
Pastry Chef*

Menu for April 19th 2008

Pranzo in presenza ed onore

di

Sua Santità

Papa Benedetto XVI



Residenza Pontificia

New York, 19 Aprile 2008

Menu

*Insalata di Fave, Asparagi Bianchi e Verdi
con Pecorino Fresco*

*Fava bean, green and white asparagus salad
topped with three-months-aged Pecorino cheese
Vespa Bianco 2006, Azienda Agricola Bastianich*

~

Zuppa di Pollo Ruspante con Agnolini
Free range organic chicken soup with agnolini

~

Tenerone di Manzo Brasato
*Goulash-braised Wagyu Flat Iron Beef
with smoked potato, sauerkraut and sour cream
Calabrone 2003, Azienda Agricola Bastianich*

~

Torta di Cioccolato e Nocciole
Chocolate-hazelnut cake
Plus Passito "per Lidia" 2003, Azienda Agricola Bastianich
or
Vintage Porto 1975, Taylor Fladgate

Crostata di Albicocche e Ricotta
Apricot and ricotta crostata

~

Caffè
Limoncello della casa

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Pastry Chef*

'Nightline' Platelist: Lidia Bastianich
Italian-American Chef Breaks Bread With the Pope
By SARAH ROSENBERG and CHRISTINA CARON
April 20, 2008—



New York chef Lidia Bastianich was in awe the day she received a call from Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Vatican's representative to the United Nations. He asked if she would consider preparing two meals for Pope Benedict XVI during his visit to New York, that is, as long as it wasn't an "imposition."

The church's humble approach touched Bastianich, who was "stunned" that they had considered her. "I know he has to eat, but certainly I didn't think it would be me," she said with characteristic modesty. "The ultimate reward, and I think blessing, is this opportunity to cook for Pope Benedict."

Most people, even established chefs accustomed to cooking for powerful people, might be nervous about such an undertaking, but Bastianich described an inner calm. "I feel very peaceful, like a warmth is around me," said Bastianich, who hosts a popular PBS cooking show.

"The menus that we planned of course is following his wishes of simplicity, of seasonality, not too elaborate a meal."

The Pope's Menu

On Friday, the pope's dinner at Archbishop Migliore's Manhattan residence began with a simple salad of steamed spring vegetables tossed with an almond vinaigrette: fava beans, string beans, asparagus, and toasted almonds topped with a dollop of warm ricotta drizzled with extra virgin olive oil. Next, the pope and his 52 other guests dined upon Cacio Pepe e Pere, which is ravioli filled with pecorino cheese, and fresh pears served in a cheese and crushed black pepper sauce.

The menu also included a risotto, which Bastianich described as "simple and straightforward." It was served with nettles, favas, fresh peas, legumes, and wild onions, with grana padano cheese and extra virgin olive oil. Bastianich decided upon a whole grilled striped bass as the main course. "He loved the idea of fish," Bastianich said. She filleted the bass, seasoning it with coarse sea salt and extra virgin olive oil. The fish was served alongside boiled fingerling potatoes, and a chicory and endive salad with a little mustard vinaigrette.

To complete the mouthwatering feast, the pope and his many guests enjoyed the comforting flavors of apple strudel. "I love making apple strudel," Bastianich said. "Since I was a little girl I used to roll up [the strudel] with my grandmother. He's from that part of Europe, I know he's going to love it. I'm trying to bring some of his food memories back to relax him. He's busy. He has philosophy of the world at mind. Maybe my strudel will just bring him to that moment to the table and make him relax."



As seen on TV:

ABC NEWS NIGHTLINE April 20th 2008

continued

Yesterday's dinner, Bastianich's second meal for Pope Benedict, was designed for a smaller crowd: his immediate circle. Saturday was also the anniversary of his third year in the papacy. The meal began with white and green asparagus topped with fresh pecorino cheese and drizzled with a light vinaigrette. Next, Bastianich chose a light soup to "make him feel warm inside and cozy."

Paying homage to the pope's middle European roots, Bastianich served goulash as the main course: beef shoulder braised until tender, then sliced and garnished with paprika, a dollop of sour cream and a side of sauerkraut. The meal ended with fruit croustade, a delicious rustic tart. Earlier in the week, Bastianich said, "I hope that, with this meal ... that he relaxes and that he feels that he is at home. The love that we did this with – we want it to come through. I hope to see a big smile on him ... and I hope he gives us a blessing.

Immigrating from Italy

Catholicism has always been a part of Bastianich's life, and even played a role in her immigration to the United States when she was 12 years old.

Born in a northeastern region of Italy, her hometown became part of Yugoslavia after World War II, forcing her family to escape a communist regime. They returned to Italy, but the country's poor postwar economy forced them to relocate once more: to North America.

The transition was slow-going. Bastianich and her family waited for two years in a political refugee camp until a special U.S. provision allowed them to immigrate to the United States in 1958.

"The Catholic charities brought us here to New York," she said. "We had no one. They found a home for us. They found a job for my father. And ultimately we settled. And I am the perfect example that if you give somebody a chance, especially here in the United States, one can find the way."

Bastianich, 62, is active in the Italian-American community and has served as Grand Marshal of the Columbus Day Parade with the Columbus Citizens Foundation, a nonprofit organization in New York City that offers scholarships to Italian-American students and promotes Italian-American heritage.

"I'm very spiritual, and I do many humanitarian things and interact especially with the Catholic charities because they helped me and we need to continue -- it's in me to give back."

Communicating Via Food

Her first memories of food were molded by her mother, her great aunt Nina, who took young Bastianich under her wing in the refugee camp, and her grandmother's fresh-from-the garden cooking.

"She grew her own potatoes. We had our wheat; we made our own olive oil, we made our wine, we had chickens, ducks, we had sheep, cows, milk," she said. "So I was raised in a very simple situation but understanding really food from the ground & the essence of food and the flavors. And those memories I took with me and I think that they lingered on. It was a way of me connecting with my roots, connecting with my family that I'd left behind. And food became such a communicator, such an important part of me, of my story. And I continued to communicate with it."



As seen on TV:

ABC NEWS NIGHTLINE April 20th 2008

continued

Growing up, she worked in bakeries, starting as a salesgirl but always ending up in the back baking. The same thing happened when she began working in restaurants.

"I found great rewards in cooking a dish and feeding it to someone," Bastianich said. "It was a means of communicating. I was giving part of my talent, or my gift and sharing it with somebody, making somebody happy. And it gave a lot back to me and I wanted to do more and more."

She considers daily meals an ideal forum for nurturing and connecting with family. "People at the table are open because they're taking in, they're taking nourishment for their body. But while they're taking nourishment for their body, they're taking all the other messages that are coming along."

All in the Family

The Bastianich family's food empire extends far beyond Lidia Bastianich's television show and her five cookbooks, although those are large accomplishments in their own right. "Lidia's Italian-American Kitchen," her cooking show on PBS is a huge hit, drawing in epicureans since 2001 with its simple, flavorful Italian recipes.

Bastianich's children also share her passion for food, and have expanded the family business. Her son, Joseph, is a restaurant owner, author and wine expert who will serve as a sommelier during the pope's dinner, using wines from the family's label.

Bastianich's daughter, Tanya, is an art historian who has also launched a travel company and a line of specialty products. Both Tanya and her grandmother, Bastianich's mother, Erminia Motika, have also appeared on several episodes of "Lidia's Italian American Kitchen" and Tanya co-wrote "Lidia's Italy," Bastianich's latest book.

"As Italians, family is the epicenter," Bastianich said. "I think it's just part of the culture. My mother, who's 87, who comes on the show, she lives with me still. My daughter lives in walking distance; she has two children.

My son, Joe, has three children. So five grandchildren. So to find ourselves on a weekend, four generations, and find ourselves in the kitchen because that's the natural place to be; it's not uncommon. And I just love it."

They're the perfect example of the American dream, illustrating just how far the family has come both literally and figuratively.

"When we left Italy to come to America, we left from Ciampino Airport in Rome, and I remember specifically we went to Saint Peter's Basilica to ask for a blessing on this, in this new venture, in this new world," Bastianich recalled. "And I remember, you know, looking around because it's just an amazing place, it was my first visit but also my mother really saying, 'Ok, ask for a blessing. We're going to need it, we're going far away.'"

"And then to be able to have this great blessing in my life in America, this great opportunity and really sort of verifying myself in a sense, becoming myself, and turn around and be able to now host and feed and cook for his holiness is just a complete circle that may be only in a dream - □ maybe it is a dream."



As seen on TV:

CW 11 NEWS April 18th 2008

<http://cw11.trb.com/news/local/wpix-cooking-pope0418,0,4317317.story>

Cooking For His Holiness

TV chef Lidia Bastianich dishes on cooking for Pope Benedict XVI

MARY MURPHY REPORTING

April 18, 2008



Upper East Side, N.Y. — Take a tour in the kitchen of Lidia Bastianich, and you'll learn life is all about the flavors.

Born on the northeastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, Lidia's family escaped communism, when Yugoslavia took their region from Italy.

"I was 12-years-old, and we were brought here by Catholic charities," said Bastianich.

And talk about an American success story. Lidia has turned the tastes of her childhood into gastronomical fame, with buzzed-about restaurants.

Best-selling cookbooks, a number of restaurants, and a public television show, which features her daughter, Tanya. And now, the gig of a lifetime.

She is just thrilled about cooking for Pope Benedict XVI, saying "this is the pinnacle of my culinary career!"

The grandmother of five has prepped meals for movie stars like Robert Deniro and Meryl Streep, and now after a request from the Archbishop who represents the Vatican at the United Nations, Lidia's commissioned the top chefs from 3 of her restaurants to man the kitchen at the East 72nd Street residence, where Pope Benedict will stay.

Dinner for 52 Friday night, and 24 the following night, and Lidia was putting aside one hour just to get thru checkpoints to bring food into the residence. Restaurateur, Angelo Vivolo tells us that's not all.

"There will be some tastings by the Secret Service to make sure everything's proper," he told the CW11.

Which brings us to the top secret of the week: what will Lidia be feeding the Pope in his first night in the Big Apple?

"We will do some fish," she dished.

Saturday marks Benedict's third anniversary as pope.

"I'm gonna bring some childhood flavors and memories on the second night."

To get more information on any of Lidia Bastianich's award-winning restaurants or cook books, [click here](#).

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As seen on TV:

NY 1 NEWS April 23rd 2008

<http://www.ny1.com/ny1/content/index.jsp?stid=247&aid=80432>

Papal Visit 2008: Chef Brings Taste Of America To Pope

A Chelsea chef has been selected to provide choice menus for Pope Benedict XVI during his U.S. trip next week. NY1's Elizabeth Kaledin filed the following report.

In the immaculate kitchens of Chelsea, Manhattan's Del Posto restaurant, chef Lidia Bastianich was already hard at work, pulling and stretching dough for the apple strudel she wants to perfect especially for her next week's customer – Pope Benedict XVI.

"We want to make him feel welcome and experience America on the one hand, and on the other hand we want him to feel at home," said Bastianich.

Bastianich, who has become a household name her Italian cooking shows on PBS, made the apple strudel in honor of Pope Benedict's German roots.

Details of the menus Bastianich has planned remain a secret for security reasons, but she shared some general ideas about what will be served.

"I think we're trying to give him the best of what the season, our locale and our experience is," said Bastianich.

According to Bastianich, Pope Benedict is not a fussy eater, and the Vatican has made very few demands about his diet. Still, Bastianich and her team of three chefs have planned a simple menu that celebrates the bounty of spring.

"We'll give [NY1] one thing away - one of the main meals will be fish," said Bastianich. "It's gonna be local. It's gonna be caught right here by local fishermen and just roasted or plainly grilled."

The fish in question will be Atlantic striped bass, to be accompanied by a wide selection of wines.

Lidia's son, Joe Bastianich, will serve as sommelier.

"Wine is certainly a part of the history and culture of Catholicism, so I would really hope the Pope is a wine lover," said Joe Bastianich.

The trickiest part of planning a dinner party for the pope is logistics.

The meals will be served in the Manhattan residence of Bishop Celestino Migliore - so restaurateur Angelo Vivolo, a longtime friend and collaborator of Lidia Bastianich's, is in charge of making sure the entire operation can be transplanted to someone else's kitchen.

"My job is to make sure that everything is in order - dishes, glasses, flatware," said Vivolo.

Vivolo will also have to accommodate teams of federal agents who will be lucky enough to sample the cuisine.

"I'm assuming they're going to be tasting the food, or taking it apart in some form or shape. Analyzing it to make sure everything is fine," said Vivolo.

But security measures do not bother Lidia Bastianich. For her, this is the opportunity of a lifetime - the chance to make bread, and break bread, with a spiritual leader.

Dining that will literally be a "religious experience."

- Elizabeth Kaledin

Lidia Bastianich**Richard Drew/Associated Press**

With her nationwide TV series, her successful books, her supermarket sauces and her highly praised restaurants, Lidia Bastianich is the queen of Italian-American cooking.

Ms. Bastianich's showcase restaurant, Felidia, on East 58th Street in Manhattan, has been pleasing diners and critics for more than a quarter century. Reviewing it in 2006, Frank Bruni, the restaurant critic of The New York Times, gave it three stars (excellent) of a possible four. "The splendid dishes that Felidia continues to turn out," Mr. Bruni wrote, " -- dishes that hit a midpoint between regal and rustic that's all their own -- suggest that Ms. Bastianich, edging up on her 60th birthday, hasn't lost sight of her beginnings. So does her frequent presence in the narrow, charming East Side townhouse that the restaurant inhabits."

Ms. Bastianich herself has said that her goal has long been to exalt and honor the food of her ancestors. "I wanted to capture my grandmother and those memories," she told The Times in 2001. "I don't want the children to forget who they are. The Italian American cuisine has been shunned in recent years as an imposter cuisine. But I think it is venerable."

She was born in Istria, an area at the juncture of Italy and what was once Yugoslavia, which took it over after World War II and made it Communist. In 1956, her family moved to Trieste, living in a refugee camp for two years. She was 10, and had been forced to leave without saying goodbye to her grandparents, who had helped raise her, running a trattoria and growing most of the food they sold and ate, making olive oil and wine, distilling grappa and curing meats.

Coming to New York, the family lived first in New Jersey and then in Astoria, Queens. Her father worked as an auto mechanic; her mother, who had been a teacher, did piece work for a clothing company; and Lidia cooked dinner each night. She attended Hunter College on a scholarship for two years, leaving to marry Felice Bastianich, who was also from Istria. They ran two restaurants in Queens before opening Felidia in 1981.

In 1992, Bryan Miller of The Times first gave the restaurant three stars, declaring that the "quality and range of cuisine here is for the most part far ahead of the competition." In 2002, Ms. Bastianich won the outstanding chef award from the James Beard Foundation, which had given her their best New York chef prize three years earlier.

Ms. Bastianich achieved nationwide prominence through her TV series, "Lidia's Italian Table," "Lidia's Italian-American Kitchen," "Lidia's Family Table" and her newest, "Lidia's Italy." Her other Manhattan restaurants include Becco, which she owns with her son, Joseph; and Esca and Del Posto (another three-star restaurant in The Times), in which she is a partner with her son and Mario Batali. She and her son also have restaurants named Lidia in both Kansas City and Pittsburgh. Her cookbooks include "Lidia's Italy," "Lidia's Family Table," "Lidia's Italian-American Kitchen," "Lidia's Italian Table" and "La Cucina di Lidia."

Despite Ms. Bastianich's many activities, Mr. Bruni noted in his Felidia review that "on many nights you can still find her on a stool at the mahogany bar just inside the entrance or at a table in one of the dining rooms" in a restaurant where a dish like the risotto with red beets, Humboldt Fog goat cheese and balsamic vinegar could "put pasta out of business" and "keep Felidia going strong for another quarter century."

April 18, 2008

TASTINGS By DOROTHY J. GAITER AND JOHN BRECHER

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120846885183124311.html>

What to Serve the Pope

For His Two Dinners in New York,
The Menus Will Feature Earthy, Ripe Wines
April 18, 2008; Page W3



Most of us get nervous about serving just the right wine when guests come to dinner. Imagine if you were hosting the pope. The pope is scheduled to make a trip to New York on Friday.

So with Pope Benedict XVI making his first trip to New York as pope Friday, we wondered what he would be eating and drinking during his visit. Because he is a native of Germany, we immediately thought that New York's famous Rieslings might find their way onto his table. But the Vatican is in Rome, so maybe he'd be eating and drinking Italian. Then we heard that Vatican insiders like to joke that his favorite wine is lemonade, though there are some reports that he has sipped beer now and then. Surely someone should show him what New York hospitality can be by putting some delicious food and wine before him.

THE POPE'S FEAST

Here are the wines that will be served, all from Italy, with the prices we paid and some comments from Joseph Bastianich and from our own tasting.

Bastianich Tocai Friulano 2006

(Colli Orientali del Friuli), \$15

Made from the most prolific indigenous white grape in Friuli. If you think of Tocai Friulano as a fun, simple quaffer, this would change your mind. This has serious earthiness that gives it significant weight in a nicely rustic sense. In fact, this is a white wine that we would decant because we found that its core of fruit showed better with air and warmth. It would be good with grilled fish, but, because of its weight, might be better with veal.

Bastianich Vespa Bianco 2006

(Venezia Giulia), \$30

The winery's flagship white, a blend of Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Picolit. It's pleasant and floral, easy to drink, with a bit of Sauvignon Blanc crispness and Chardonnay mouthfeel and a hint of honey. Good with sardines.

La Mozza Aragone 2005

(Maremma Toscana), \$35

La Mozza Vineyard's premier wine. It's made from a fascinating blend of Mediterranean and Rhône varieties including Sangiovese, Alicante, Syrah and Carignan. Mr. Bastianich said the region is "very hot and arid" and these grapes make a "very powerful wine, kissed by the Tuscan heat without being jammy and too extracted. The Rhône varieties give it a liveliness." We found that this had blackberries, cherries and warming alcohol on the nose and were prepared for a wine of some heft -- but were pleased and surprised when we sipped it to find a soft, velvety wine that was lovely. There are hints of lilacs and some roasted earth, but mostly it tastes like fresh, ripe-from-the-sun grapes, made more by God than man -- perfect for the pope.



continued

Bastianich Calabrone 2003

(Venezia Giulia), \$75

The Bastianich estate's reserve red. It is only made in great vintages, Mr. Bastianich told us. It is a blend of Merlot, Refosco, Pignolo and Cabernet Franc. Some of the grapes undergo appassimento, or drying, which increases the intensity of their flavors. "It's kind of a real extreme expression of what a cold-weather wine can be like when it's great," he said. Sometimes the red wines in this region can be "vegetal and stemmy," he added, "but these wines are more like tar resin, fresh tobacco and cedar and have woody flavors that are super-appealing." In the glass, the wine looks brand new, with lively purple highlights, and smells raisiny. It reminded us of Amarone -- intense and raisiny -- but the trick of this wine is that it has plenty of flavor without an excess of power.

Bastianich Perlidia Plus Passito 2003

(Venezia Giulia), \$75 (half-bottle)

A dessert wine made from super-ripe Tocai Friulano grapes that were partially dried to enhance their sweetness. Mr. Bastianich said only one barrel of this was made and was served in magnums to celebrate his mother's 60th birthday. "We put some in small bottles so that she can have one every year. It is not something we are going to make ever again." This is quite a remarkable wine. It tastes like rich, sweet earth, without too much sweetness and with abundant acidity.

It turns out that the folks who were granted that honor are Lidia Matticchio Bastianich, famous as "the first lady of Italian cuisine," and her son, Joseph, who have virtually cornered the market on all things Italian, sitting atop an empire that includes, separately and together with others, television shows, restaurants (some with Mario Batali), cookbooks, a wine store, a wine book, wineries in Italy and Argentina, an Italian tour company and retail businesses selling sauces and olive oil. Mrs. Bastianich, a devout Catholic, will create the menus and help prepare dinner for 52 people on Friday and 24 people on Saturday. And Mr. Bastianich, part-owner of Italian Wine Merchants in New York City and co-author of a book we've recommended, "Vino Italiano: The Regional Wines of Italy," will provide the wines from his store and his wineries, including a special dessert wine, not available for sale at stores, named for his mother.

Light and Seasonal

Mrs. Bastianich said the Vatican asked her not to divulge many details about her meals until after the pope leaves. "I have to respect their wishes," she told us in a telephone interview. (We began calling the Archdiocese of New York about the pope's meals back in February, and the only thing the media office would tell us was that the dinners weren't open to the public.) Mrs. Bastianich said she and Joseph may eventually list the recipes and paired wines on her Web site because "we want to share the excitement." This much she would tell us: "The pope, of course, is very low-key, so we'll serve light things, seasonal things. "He's not a big wine drinker at all. He does drink orange juice, but will have a sip of wine, I hope, for his sake," she added with a chuckle. The first dinner will be particularly light, she said, because it will be his "first from his travels" from Washington, D.C., to New York. As we all know, travel can be stressful no matter the pains that can be taken to smooth the way. Some of the dishes will be "partly from my repertoire," Mrs. Bastianich said. "He is German, so we will have a little bit of those influences."

Home cookin' for the Pope

BY DAVE GOLDINER

DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Friday, April 18th 2008, 4:00 AM



Lidia Bastianich has a very special guest for dinner on Friday night and Saturday - Pope Benedict.

Like any good cook, the TV chef and New York restaurateur only hopes to make the Holy Father and his guests happy.

"I'm a very spiritual person," Bastianich, 61, said yesterday. "We're breaking bread with His Holiness, and obviously that's something very, very special."

On orders from Rome, Bastianich wouldn't reveal the exact menus for either tonight's feast for 50-odd guests or tomorrow's more-intimate gathering of 20, both at the upper East Side residence of the Vatican's envoy to the United Nations.

She did say the main course tonight would be fish. And she hinted that striped bass is plentiful in New York markets.

There also will be plenty of local seasonal vegetables, including asparagus, fava beans and baby string beans.

Dessert will include some of Benedict's beloved fruit, and the wines will come from her family's vineyard in northern Italy.

"We're going to try to make him and his guests comfortable," she said. "He's very busy and we want to use the food to help him relax."

Bastianich, who with her husband owns Felidia on E. 58th St., comes from an area of Europe that is now part of Croatia and plans to cook some dishes that could remind the pontiff of his youth in Germany.

The chef said she believes she was picked for the high-profile culinary assignment because of her inspirational life story - her family was brought to America by Catholic Charities.

She points out that meals play a central role in almost all the world's religions, mostly because people feel such an intimate connection to food.

"Food is very personal for me," she said. "It's a chance to make a connection with the Holy Father, and it's an honor I'll never forget."



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Mrs. Bastianich stressed the larger significance of feeding the pope. "Going back to the Bible, it is breaking bread. The table is so meaningful. We will have the opportunity to meet him at the table and to deliver the meal as a basic medium of communication. In all different religions there is the table. In Judaism for Passover there is the sharing of the matzo. For me the table is a place for people to really take time and have communion with their families and friends and to communicate on a human level.

"For me, it is a great opportunity to communicate with His Holiness with the food that I cook. There's nothing more direct than the ability to do this."

How about the wine? That is Joseph's department, so we called him and he turned philosophical, too. "I have the great privilege of being involved in a real way in the life cycle of the vine. It's a cycle that transcends our own humanity and underscores how fleeting our lives are. These vines will continue to make wine long after we're gone.

"Being able to serve the pope and the weight of the history of that institution is so impressive to me. This is a big deal. It's an incredible honor. My wines are my favorite things and to be able to show them in this venue is so exciting." Lidia Matticchio Bastianich and her son, Joseph, are in charge of food and wine for two dinners for the pope this weekend.

Ten years ago, Mr. Bastianich and his mother purchased a vineyard in Buttrio, in the Colli Orientali region of Italy. The wines that will be served to the pope came either from that winery, Azienda Agricola Bastianich, or from La Mozza, a winery that Mr. Bastianich, his mother and Chef Batali bought in 2001 in the Maremma region of Tuscany.

Respect for the Food

We asked Mr. Bastianich if we could buy a bottle of each of the wines he will serve so we could taste them and he graciously agreed.

The most notable aspect of the wines was their earthiness, a genuine and proud sense of place. The wines were ripe but eschewed pyrotechnics, letting the fruit speak for itself. We felt all of them would be excellent with whatever meals Mrs. Bastianich prepares -- or, as Dottie said of Joseph at one point, "He's showing respect for his mother's food." Indeed, these wines show again that good wine isn't just about the liquid in a bottle, but about history, geography, family and respect. Even if the pope sticks with lemonade for dinner, he can still drink heartily of what wine symbolizes.

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Cooking for the Pope: Lidia Bastianich Comes Full Circle

Posted by [Ed Levine](#), April 22, 2008 at 10:00 AM

The Papal Menu, Revealed



Pope Benedict XVI and Lidia Bastianich, who cooked for the pope while he visited New York City.

For [Lidia Bastianich](#), cooking for [Pope Benedict XVI](#) was more than an honor. In her own words, it was a "closing of the circle."

Forty years ago, when Lidia was 12 and living in a refugee camp in Trieste, Italy, with her parents and brother, a Catholic relief organization provided them with safe passage and the proper visas to emigrate to America. But Lidia and her parents had to go to the Vatican to get the blessing of the pope at the time, [Pope Paul VI](#).

So one can only imagine how thrilled she was to cook not one, not two, but three meals for the current pope during his visit to New York City. And Pope Benedict XVI turned out to be a serious eater, which is not surprising, given the fact that his mom was a hotel chef. This is what Lidia and her colleagues served His Holiness.

Saturday Lunch

Lunch on Saturday was a relatively light repast that Lidia and her colleagues, [Mark Ladner \(Del Posto\)](#) [William Gallagher \(Becco\)](#), and [Fortunato Nicotra \(Felidia\)](#), improvised on the spot to work with what the nuns had already prepared for the pope:

Italian cherry tomatoes with celery and grana Padana alongside some fresh mache

Asparagus soup thickened with boiled potato and sautéed asparagus

Baked monkfish Sicilian-style with seasoned breadcrumbs

Peach fruit tart that, according to Lidia, almost went directly from the oven to the table

Saturday Dinner

Dinner on Saturday was for 52, including all the cardinals from around the world who had gathered in New York City for the pope's visit. Most of the recipes can be found in Lidia's most recent book, [Lidia's Italy](#).

String bean salad with sheep's milk ricotta and pickled shallots and toasted almonds

Ravioli with fresh pecorino and pears

Risotto with nettles, fava beans, and ramps

Whole roasted striped bass with boiled fingerling potatoes and a frisée salad

Apple strudel with honey vanilla ice cream (with honeycomb intact)



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It sounds like a lot of food, and it was, but when you serve the pope, Lidia said, you can't give him too much food at once. Each plate is presented separately because the pope can't be seen as gluttonous, gluttony being one of the seven deadly sins.

Lidia said that, after this meal, she asked the pope whether he enjoyed it. The cardinals laughed, as that's not a question one is supposed to ask the pope, who is supposed to be preoccupied with profoundly important spiritual matters. Nonetheless, Pope Benedict XVI smiled and said he had indeed enjoyed himself.

Sunday Dinner

Dinner Sunday was for the pope's entourage, a mere 24 people. Here's the menu:

White and green asparagus salad with fresh 30-day pecorino, fava beans, and green chickpeas with lemon and olive oil

Agnolini (little flying-saucer-shaped pasta filled with roast meat that Lidia served because they look like [hosts](#)) in free-range chicken soup with grana Padana on the bottom of the bowl

Beef goulash made from Wagyu-style flat iron beef with a side of *patate in tecia* (pan-fried potatoes with bacon and onions that Lidia says remind her of hash browns) served with sauerkraut and sour cream

Chocolate-hazelnut cake with "Tu Es" inscribed on it, topped by a two-foot-high marzipan [mitre](#) made by [Bruno Bakery](#) owner Bruno Settepani

Apricot and ricotta crostata

After the goulash, the pope said to Lidia, "These are my mother's flavors." Lidia said she almost cried when she heard this. All the wines, Lidia said, were selected by her son, Joe Bastianich, and came from the Bastianich vineyards in Italy. For Lidia, whose perilous journey to America at the tender age of 12 was blessed and sanctioned during a visit to St. Peter's Basilica some 40 years ago, cooking for the pope was so much more than a celebrity chef taking a star turn. "It was celestial. It meant my life had come full circle. I came to America because a Catholic relief organization provided safe passage, and here I am cooking for, feeding, and nourishing the pope. It doesn't get any better than that, does it?"